DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 416 114 SO 027 282

AUTHOR Hayes, Bill, Ed.; Dengleman, Charles, Ed.

TITLE Citizenship Mini-Lessons.
INSTITUTION Constitutional Rights Foundation, Los Angeles, CA.
PUB DATE 1996-00-00
NOTE 31p.
AVAILABLE FROM Constitutional Rights Foundation, 601 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90005, telephone: 213-487-5590.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Citizen Participation; Citizen Role; *Citizenship; *Citizenship Education; Citizenship Responsibility; Community Responsibility; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Materials; *Leadership; Leadership Training; Social Studies; Teaching Guides

ABSTRACT

This booklet provides interactive mini-lessons on citizenship to be used by teachers or youth leaders to help young people develop a deeper understanding of citizenship and civic action. The 14 mini-lessons are arranged under 4 categories that describe the elements of active citizenship: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors. The instructor materials contain an introduction, teaching methods, and lesson instructions. Student handouts for the lesson are included. (EH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 416 114

Citizenship Mini-Lessons

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
M. Craddy
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

SO 027 282

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Citizenship Mini-Lessons

Todd Clark
Executive Director

Marshall Croddy
Director of Programs and Materials Development

Bill Hayes and Charles Degelman
Editors and Writers

Andrew Costly
Production Manager

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION
601 South Kingsley Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90005
(213) 487-5590
(213) 386-0459 FAX

©1996, Constitutional Rights Foundation

Instructor Materials

(Blue Pages)

Overview

This booklet provides interactive mini-lessons on citizenship. They can be used by teachers or youth leaders who want young people to develop a deeper understanding of citizenship and civic action.

Since the mini-lessons may be used in different settings, they have been designed to be as flexible as possible. A single lesson may be taught. The whole series may be taught in any order. They can be used with large groups or small groups. They can be used with young people of varying abilities.

The 14 mini-lessons are arranged under four categories that describe the elements of active citizenship: Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, and Behaviors.

This booklet is organized in two sections. **The Instructor Materials** are found on the *blue pages*. They include the following sections:

- **Introduction.** Provides a rationale for the lessons and a brief discussion of the elements of citizenship.
- **Teaching Methods.** Offers tips on planning, brainstorming, directed discussions, small-group work, and handling controversy. These tips can help you deliver the lessons most effectively.
- **Lesson Instructions.** Consists of a short set of instructions for each lesson. It includes an **Overview**, or short description of each lesson; a **Preparation**, or list of materials you will need; **Steps** for teaching each lesson; and in some cases, suggestions for **Follow-up** activities.

The Participant Handouts are contained in the *white pages*. Each lesson has a single-page handout that can be easily photocopied and passed out to participants. Each handout includes the following elements:

- **Introduction.** A brief description of the material and explanation of why participants are being asked to explore it.
- **I. Material.** A reading, facts, or other information for activities and discussions.
- **II. Activity.** Easy-to-follow steps for members to use to interact with the material and each other.
- **III. For Discussion.** Questions for reviewing the material.

Also included is a **Resource Guide** that contains a reading list and ideas for community-service projects promoting citizenship. This guide can be photocopied and given out to participants.

Introduction

As a teacher or youth leader, you have an exciting opportunity to bring new meaning to the idea of citizenship. We all understand citizenship to mean the right to vote, the obligation to obey the law, and the responsibility to serve on juries. But citizenship can mean much more. Citizenship can also mean improving the quality of life in America.

Citizenship Mini-Lessons is designed to give you the tools you need to introduce young people to a broader vision of citizenship. You will find 14 clear, simple mini-lessons that will help young people explore the elements that play a vital role in developing effective citizenship.

The Introductory Lesson will give participants an opportunity to brainstorm on the elements of citizenship: knowledge, skills,

attitudes and values, and behaviors. These four elements serve as organizers for the other lessons, which can be used in any sequence.

Knowledge

To function effectively as a citizen, it is important that participants have some basic knowledge. Mini-lessons on knowledge will help them discuss citizen rights, evaluate community issues, and learn about their community and its institutions.

Skills

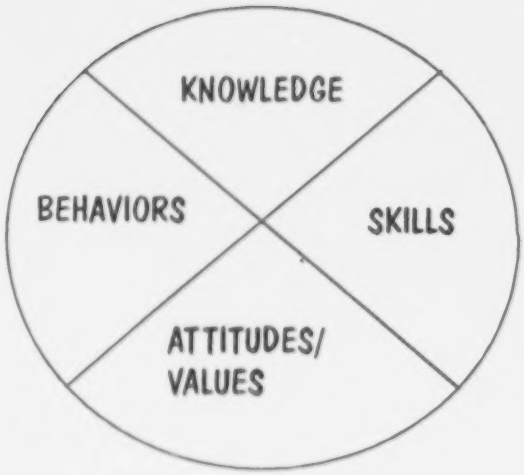
The ability to use information effectively, to make a plan and act on it, and to move others to support your efforts requires special skills. Mini-lessons on skills will give participants methods to evaluate a public policy and use the media to explore community issues. Participants will also conduct a survey on citizenship issues and learn how to evaluate information for objectivity and accuracy.

Attitudes

An effective citizen upholds democratic values and attitudes. Mini-lessons on attitudes will give participants the opportunity to discuss methods for dealing with conflicting rights and values, the pros and cons of getting involved in community problems, why different perspectives exist, and how to accommodate them.

Behaviors

An effective citizen acts to improve his or her community. Mini-lessons on behaviors will give participants the opportunity to discuss factors contributing to voter participation, how people can improve the quality of life in the work place and at home, and what they can do to make a difference in their own community.



Teaching Methods

Citizenship Mini-Lessons is designed to create a broader vision of citizenship through selected readings, group study, directed discussions, and brainstorming. As an instructor, it will be your job to introduce the information in this booklet and guide participants to participate effectively in the mini-lessons. Here are some teaching tips.

Planning

Read the Lesson Instructions and the handouts well in advance. Plan how you are going to present the material. Make sure you have all the material listed under "Preparation." The preparation may call for a chalkboard. If you do not have a chalkboard in your meeting room, you can usually find pads of low-cost flip chart paper (27 x 34 inches) in most office supply stores.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is intended to generate new ideas. Typically, a group of brainstormers are given a clearly stated question such as, "What is the most serious problem in your community?" Within a limited time, members are told to think of the greatest possible number of answers. The time pressure short-circuits judgment: If participants must come up with lots of ideas quickly, they have no time to judge or censor their own thought process. Here are a few quick rules for brainstorming:

- Say anything that comes to mind.
- Do not judge or criticize what others say.
- Build on other ideas.

Directed Discussions

A discussion section is included in every handout. Discussions are intended to guide a further exploration of the material. As the instructor, it will be your responsibility to guide, or direct, the discussion. Use the discussion questions to get the process going. Once the discussion is going, try to take a back seat and allow the discussion to take its course.

A directed discussion should treat all participants as equal partners. Be sure they listen to one another. Try to arrange the seats in a circle so they can look at one another when they are speaking. There may not be a single, easy answer to the questions raised. Don't allow the conversation to stray off the topic. During discussions, encourage participants to:

- State their ideas and opinions clearly.
- Support their statements with facts or logical arguments.
- Define the terms they use.
- Keep an open mind and listen to one another.
- Respect the opinions of others.
- Work together to answer the questions posed.

Small Groups

By working in small groups of 2–5 members, people get the opportunity to communicate, cooperate, persuade, bargain, and compromise. They learn that problems are best solved through the efforts of groups rather than individuals. By keeping groups small, it is harder for members to blend into the background. Each must make a contribution. Here are a few tips to make small groups work:

- Make sure people understand the activity before they begin.
- Make sure each participant has a task in the group.
- Monitor progress by circulating among the groups.
- Make sure all group members participate.

Handling Controversy

Disagreement is a real, indeed necessary, part of dealing with community issues. Controversy cannot (and should not) be avoided. When properly handled, disagreements can bring information and understanding to a discussion. When controversy arises in discussion clarify the disagreement. Identify the issue under dispute. Point out areas of conflict and agreement, and look for assumptions that give rise to the controversy. When conflict becomes apparent, ask members to follow these ground rules:

- Argue ideas, not personalities.
- Admit to weak points in their own position.
- Listen carefully and represent the opposite viewpoint fairly and accurately.
- Concentrate arguments on facts and information.

Lesson Instructions

(For use with Participant Handouts)

Citizenship (Introductory Lesson):

Overview: In this lesson, participants examine the meaning of citizenship. They read about citizenship and then in small groups brainstorm the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors it takes to be an effective citizen.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of the **Introductory Handout**, paper, and a pen or pencil.

Steps:

1. Ask participants: "Who in your opinion is an effective citizen?" (Accept various answers.)
2. Tell them today they are going to read about citizenship and think about what it takes to be an effective citizen. Ask them to read the Introduction and Section I: "Citizenship in Our Free Society." When they finish, briefly answer any questions they have.
3. Put participants in groups of four. Tell them to brainstorm answers to the four questions about citizenship in Section II: Activity." Each participant should be responsible for recording on paper the group's answers to one question.
4. When the groups complete the brainstorm, tell them to rank their top three answers to each question in order of importance.
5. Hold a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."

Rights and Freedoms (Knowledge Lesson 1):

Overview: This lesson requires participants to think about the importance of the Bill of Rights. Participants read about a conquering "visitor from outer space" who will allow Americans to keep only five rights. In small groups, members choose five rights and then with the whole group make a final, unanimous decision.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Knowledge Handout 1**. Instructor will need a chalkboard.

Steps:

1. Ask participants: "Can you name a few rights that Americans have?" (Accept various answers.) Tell them that today they are going to evaluate which rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights are most important.
2. Ask participants to read the Introduction and Section I: "A Visitor From Outer Space." When they finish, briefly answer any questions.
3. Divide participants into groups of 5–6. Tell them to read Section II: "Activity." Make sure they understand their decision must be **unanimous** and they must select the **five** most important rights.
4. List the 11 rights on the board. Ask the groups to come together and share their findings.
5. Hold a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."

Citizen Choices (Knowledge Lesson 2):

Overview: This lesson asks participants to select a community problem and persuade others of its importance. Participants read a brief essay and then select a problem, form groups based on their selection, and make arguments to persuade others.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Knowledge Handout 2**, paper, pen or pencil. Instructor will need a chalkboard.

Steps:

1. Have participants read Introduction and Section I: "Selecting Problems." When they finish, briefly answer any questions.
2. Ask participants to read Section II: "Activity."
3. Write the eight problems listed under "America's Deadlines" on the board. Point to item number 1 and ask: "Who has selected this item as the most pressing problem?" As participants raise their hands, direct them to meet together in an area of the room. If no one selects the item, move to the next item.
4. Continue this process for items 2–8, at which time you should have several groups of different sizes around the room. Ask each to prepare a brief argument in favor of its selection. After a few minutes, call on each group to make its presentation.
5. After each presentation, ask if anyone has changed his or her mind and would like to switch groups. Discuss the reasons.
6. Conclude by holding a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."

Community Exploration (Knowledge Lesson 3):

Overview: In this lesson, participants find government and non-profit agencies in the community that are concerned with four problem areas: education, crime, health, and the environment. Participants read tips on exploring the community and then go out in the community looking for these agencies.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Knowledge Handout 3**, paper, four 3 X 5 cards, and a pen or pencil.

Steps:

1. Ask participants: "What community agencies do you know about that address community problems?" (Accept various answers.) Tell them that in this lesson they will find more of these agencies.
2. Ask them to read the Introduction and Section I: "Locating Information About the Community." When they finish, briefly answer any questions and discuss any other ideas they have for finding information.
3. Put participants in four groups. Assign each group one of the four problem areas: education, environment, health, or crime. Ask participants to read Section II: "Activity."
4. Pass out four 3 X 5 cards to each participant. Inform participants that each will be responsible for filling out four cards and that groups will report their findings at the next meeting. Give the groups some time to plot their search strategies.
5. At the next meeting, ask each group to present the agencies they found out about. Then hold a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."

Follow-up: Use the cards to create a Community Resource File Box. Ask participants to create a chart showing the relationships among the various agencies.

Policy Analysis (Skills Lesson 1):

Overview: This lesson provides participants with an opportunity to practice policy-analysis skills. Participants read about a policy (boot camps for young offenders) and then, using a set of policy-analysis questions, evaluate the policy.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Skills Handout 1**, paper, and a pen or pencil.

Steps:

1. Ask participants: "What's the best way to decide whether you favor or oppose a law?" (Accept various answers.)
2. Tell participants that today they are going to evaluate a policy proposal using a set of questions.
3. Ask participants to read the Introduction and Section I: "Boot Camps for Young Offenders." When they finish, briefly answer any questions they have.
4. Place participants in groups of 2–3. Ask them to evaluate the boot camp policy using the five policy-analysis questions in Section II: "Activity." Make sure they write down their answers.
5. When they finish, hold a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."

Conducting a News Search (Skills Lesson 2):

Overview: In this lesson, participants use the local newspaper as a tool for gathering information about community problems. Participants read about newspapers and news articles. Then they search for articles on community problems, arrange them by problem area, and report their findings to the larger group.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Skills Handout 2**, paper, and pen or pencil. Each group of 3–4 will need a recent copy of a local paper.

Steps:

1. Have participants read the Introduction. Ask them: "Why is it important to be well-informed?" (Accept various answers.)
2. Ask participants to read Section I: "Newspapers." When they finish, use a copy of your local newspaper to locate its different sections and explain their function.
3. Divide participants into groups of 3–4. Distribute one newspaper to each group. Tell participants to use the tips in Section II: "Activity" to search the paper for articles on education, public safety, health, and the environment.
4. Tell participants to make a list of the articles they find according to topic and write a brief description of the main idea of each article. Tell them to choose one person to report their findings to the larger group.
5. After all groups have reported, hold a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."

Follow-up: (1) Ask participants to collect news articles on the problem area that interests them most. (2) Ask participants to watch a television news broadcast and compare the problems covered in the newspaper with those mentioned on television.

Polling (Skills Lesson 3):

Overview: In this lesson, participants examine opinion polling. They read questions for analyzing polls and then conduct a poll on citizenship behaviors.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Skills Handout 3**, paper, and a pen.

Steps:

1. Ask participants: "How many of you have taken part in a poll or survey?" Tell them that all of them have just taken part in a poll. Ask them: "What value do polls have?" (Accept various answers.)
2. Tell them today they are going to read a little about polls and even conduct one. Ask participants to read the Introduction and Section I: "Questions to Ask About Opinion Polls and Surveys." When they finish, briefly answer any questions they have.
3. Put participants in pairs. Tell them to conduct the survey on each other.
4. Hold a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."
5. Ask participants to conduct the survey on five of their friends or fellow workers, write the results on paper, and bring them to the next session. At the next session, share and discuss the results.

Follow-up: Ask participants to bring in surveys they find and examine them by using the Questions to Ask About Opinion Polls and Surveys.

Does It Make Sense? (Skills Lesson 4):

Overview: In this lesson, participants examine types of propaganda. They read about some types of propaganda and in pairs identify an example of each type.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Skills Handout 4** and a pen.

Steps:

1. Ask participants: "What is propaganda?" Make sure they understand that it is an emotional appeal to persuade and it is common in all types of advertising.
2. Tell them today they are going to read about some types of propaganda and then try to identify the different types. Ask participants to read the Introduction and Section I: "Types of Propaganda." When they finish, briefly answer any questions they have.
3. Put participants in pairs. Ask them to follow the directions in Section II: "Activity."
4. Regroup and discuss the answers: 1. Repetition; 2. Plain Folks; 3. Name Calling; 4. Bandwagon; 5. Testimonial; 6. Glittering Generality.
5. Hold a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."

Follow-up: Ask participants to find examples of propaganda in the media.

Values in Conflict (Attitudes Lesson 1):

Overview: In this lesson, participants examine conflicting values. They read about a Supreme Court case and then role play attorneys and justices in the case.

Preparation: Each member will need a copy of **Attitudes Handout 1**.

Steps:

1. Ask participants: "What things that you throw in the trash would you want no one to look at?" (Love letters, photos, etc.)
2. Tell participants that they are going to examine a controversy over trash and the right to privacy. Ask them to read the Introduction and Section I: "*California v. Greenwood*." When they finish, discuss what the case is about.
3. Divide participants into groups of three (triads). Assign each triad member one of three roles—Supreme Court justice, defense attorney, or attorney for the state.
4. Regroup participants so each role group sits together. Attorneys should think up their best arguments and justices should think of questions to ask each side.
5. Redivide into triads. Each side will have two minutes to make its presentation. The justice can interrupt to ask questions. After both sides present, each justice should stand and prepare to present a decision on the case.
6. Ask each justice to present his or her decision and reasons for it.
7. Hold a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion." (Note: The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of California, reasoning that bags left on the street are commonly opened by "children, scavengers...and other members of the public.")

Getting Involved (Attitudes Lesson 2):

Overview: In this lesson, participants read a case study of an actual event and discuss issues of citizenship involvement.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Attitudes Handout 2**.

Steps:

1. Have participants read the Introduction and ask: Can anyone relate an experience from your own life where someone did not get involved?
2. Explain that sometimes not getting involved can have serious consequences. Then have members read Section I: "Thirty-eight Witnesses."
3. Hold a discussion using the questions in Section II: "For Discussion."

Differing Perspectives (Attitudes Lesson 3):

Overview: This lesson focuses on differing perspectives that might influence people's opinions. Participants read polling data showing sharp differences in opinion based on gender, race, and age, and then in small groups they think of reasons for these differences.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Attitudes Handout 3**.

Steps:

1. Ask: "Why doesn't everyone hold the same opinion on controversial issues?" (Accept various answers.) Explain that today they are going to take a look at different perspectives on issues.
2. Ask participants to read the Introduction and Section I: "Differences of Opinion." When they finish, briefly answer any questions.
3. Divide participants into groups of 3–4. Tell them to discuss reasons for the differences in opinion in each poll.
4. Regroup the participants and discuss the results using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."

Citizenship and Voting (Behaviors Lesson 1):

Overview: In this lesson, participants discuss voting in the United States. Participants compare voting rates in the United States with those of other democracies. Then they discuss causes and possible solutions to the problem of low voter turnout.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Behaviors Handout 1**.

Steps:

1. Ask participants to read the Introduction. Ask them: "Are you over 18? Are you an American citizen? Are you registered to vote?"
2. Tell participants they are going to discuss causes of low voter turnout in the United States. Ask them to read Section I: "People Who Vote."
3. Hold a discussion using the questions in Section II: "For Discussion."

Active Citizenship for Life (Behaviors Lesson 2):

Overview: This lesson seeks to expand participants' understanding of citizenship. Participants read about how effective citizens help their communities in many ways. Then in four groups, they brainstorm ways people can help their communities at home, at work, in the neighborhood, and in their community at large.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Behaviors Handout 2**, paper, and pen or pencil. Instructor will need a chalkboard.

Steps:

1. Make four columns across the top of the board with these headings: Environment, Education, Health, and Public Safety.)
2. Tell participants that today they're going to think about how everyday citizens can affect these areas. Instruct them to read Introduction and Section I: "Effective Citizenship." When they finish, briefly answer any questions.
3. Divide participants into four groups: education, environment, public safety, and health. Ask them to read Section II: "Activity." Tell them to come up with as many ideas as they can.
4. Have participants come together and report their responses. Down the left side of the board, write "work," "home," "neighborhood," and "community." Record their responses on the board.
5. Hold a discussion using the questions in Section III: "For Discussion."

What Can You Do? (Behaviors Lesson 3):

Overview: In this lesson, participants read a true story about a successful neighborhood project and then create their own plan to address a community problem.

Preparation: Each participant will need a copy of **Behaviors Handout 3**, paper, and pen or pencil. Instructor will need a chalkboard.

Steps:

1. Briefly discuss the Introduction with participants by asking: "Do you think it is possible to change things? Why or why not?"
2. Tell participants they are going to discuss ways to make a difference in their own community. Ask participants to read Section I: "Making a Difference."
3. Hold a discussion using the question in Section II: "For Discussion."
4. Divide members into groups of 3–4. Ask each group to brainstorm ideas to address a problem in their own community. Use the six steps listed in Section III: "Activity."
5. When each group has completed its brainstorm, ask it to present its project ideas to the whole group.

Resource Guide

Reading List

Handbooks for Taking Action in the Community:

- *Active Citizenship Today Field Guide* Constitutional Rights Foundation and Close Up Foundation (1994).
- We Are Resourceful: A Community Problem-Solving Resource Kit for Young People United Way of America (1993).

Information on Single Issues From Different Viewpoints:

- *National Issues Forums* Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co.
- *Opposing Viewpoints* series. Greenhaven Press.
- *Annual Editions Series*. Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc.

Project Ideas:

- *50 Ways to Help Your Community: A Handbook for Change* by Steve Fiffer and Sharon Sloan Fiffer. Doubleday (1994).

Fifteen Ideas for Community-Service Projects Promoting Active Citizenship

1. Hold a voter registration drive. Set up a card table at a mall or go door-to-door.
2. Set up a campaign to get out the vote. Put up posters. Call registered voters. Provide a transportation service for voters unable to take themselves to the polls.
3. Tutor immigrants who want to become citizens.
4. Sponsor a forum on an important community issue. Be sure all sides are represented.
5. Create and conduct a tour of local government institutions—courts, city hall, etc.—for school children.
6. Develop and distribute a pamphlet showing the pros and cons of an important community issue that voters must decide.
7. Create and distribute a list of community boards that citizens can serve on.
8. Set up a volunteer program for a nonprofit that promotes citizenship.
9. Create a show on citizenship for elementary or middle school children. Present it to schools in the community.
10. Create a community awareness fair exploring citizen service opportunities in education, public safety, health, and environment.
11. As a group, create a list of citizenship responsibilities. Survey community members about these responsibilities. Get the local newspaper to publish the results.
12. Create a newsletter to communicate with others about service projects.
13. Create a flier to publicize your group's activities and projects in the community. Distribute it to interested citizens.
14. Organize a Neighborhood Watch in your community.
15. At a youth center, organize a project for young people to benefit the community.

Citizenship Mini-Lessons

Participant Handouts

(White Pages)

Citizenship

Introduction: Citizenship can mean much more than memorizing faceless names and dates from a history book or spending a Saturday cleaning up a vacant lot. What is citizenship *really* about, and how can it help you make a real and lasting difference in your own life and the life of your community?

I. Citizenship in Our Free Society

For a free society to flourish, its members must constantly renew their commitment to citizenship. At a basic level, citizenship means voting, obeying the law, and serving on juries. On another level it means much more. Citizenship also means:

- Becoming informed about the critical issues facing our nation and its communities.
- Making a commitment to personal responsibility for the welfare of ourselves, our families, and our neighbors.
- Getting involved at the grassroots level to solve problems and build a better future for everyone.

This is what American citizenship is about.

II. Activity

In small groups, list as many ideas as you can in response to these four questions:

1. What does an effective citizen need to **know**? (How laws are made, etc.)
2. What **skills** does an effective citizen need? (Speaking, etc.)
3. What **attitudes** does an effective citizen need? (Belief that one person can make a difference, etc.)
4. What does an effective citizen need to **do**? (Vote, etc.)

III. For Discussion

1. What do you think are the three most important citizenship skills? The three most important attitudes? Behaviors? Items of knowledge? Explain.
2. What can you do to develop citizenship knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors?

Rights and Freedoms

Introduction: As a U.S. citizen, you have certain individual freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights. What would life be like if somebody took away your rights? Are some rights more valuable than others? How would you decide which rights were the most important? Think about these questions while you read the following story.

I. A Visitor from Outer Space

It is the year 2050 and you are watching the wall-sized television monitor in your living room when a special news bulletin comes on. A strange robot-like creature appears on the screen and informs you that he has taken over America. You rapidly flick through the 500 channels, but find he is on every one.

"ATTENTION," he begins, "I am STHGIR from planet NOITUTITSNOC. Just as I have taken over television, I will take over your lives. But I come in peace. I realize that individual freedom means a great deal to American citizens. Consequently, I will not take away all your rights. You have a choice. From a list of fundamental rights, you may pick FIVE to keep. Think carefully before you vote, as all your rights as citizens will terminate except for the ones you select. You must decide as a group and your decision must be UNANIMOUS. To help you all reach a unanimous decision, a special edition of Larry King Live will follow this announcement. Failure to make a unanimous decision will result in the termination of ALL rights. Cast your vote by entering the numbers and pressing the pound key on your remote. This list will now appear on screen."

Choose Five Only:

1. Right to bear arms
2. Right to freedom of speech
3. Right to a lawyer
4. Right to protection from cruel and unusual punishment
5. Right to freedom of press
6. Right to a jury trial
7. Right to freedom of religion
8. Right to peacefully assemble
9. Right to privacy
10. Protection from self-incrimination
11. Right to equal protection of the laws

II. Activity

In small groups, **unanimously** decide on the five most important rights. Keep in mind:

- Rights affect our lives on both a personal and societal level.
- Some rights have a broader scope than others. Think about which rights might include other rights.

III. For Discussion

1. Was it difficult to reach a unanimous decision? What are the pros and cons of coming to a unanimous decision instead of taking a majority vote?
2. Which rights, if any, did you find encompass other rights?
3. Would our society be different if we were limited to the five rights you chose? If so, how?

Citizen Choices

Introduction: Every day you are confronted with serious social problems that affect the quality of life for ourselves and our community. The problems might concern education, public safety, health, the environment, or other matters. As community members, you can help with these problems. Where do you begin? Where will you be most effective? What problems do you think are most pressing?

I. Selecting Problems

While government, business, and non-profit groups all play a role in addressing America's problems, they don't have enough resources to deal with every problem. Even with the help of volunteers, not all problems can be fully addressed. Hard choices must be made.

For government at the local, state, and federal level, legislators must decide every year which programs will be funded and which will not. As individuals and volunteers, we must decide what charitable causes to support and where to put our time and energy. Once we have decided, we also have to try to persuade others—our governmental representatives, community groups, and friends and associates—that the cause we believe in is worth supporting.

Choosing issues and persuading others of their importance is an essential civic responsibility.

II. Activity

Carefully review the following list of some problems that currently face America. Decide for yourself which problem is the most important. Answer: Which has the most pressing deadline? Which, if solved, will benefit the greatest number of people? Form a group with others who have made the same choice, discuss your reasons, and be prepared to persuade others that yours is the most pressing deadline.

America's Deadlines

1. AIDS
2. Illiteracy
3. Child abuse
4. Air, land, and water pollution
5. Gang-related violence and shootings
6. High drop-out rates from school
7. Forest, wetlands, and wildlife preservation
8. Drug and alcohol abuse

III. For Discussion

1. What additional problems might be added to the list?
2. What could you and your group do to address each problem?

Community Exploration

Introduction: In your community, local government, its agencies, and non-profit organizations are also concerned about your community's problems. These organizations play a major role in community decision-making. If you know how they work, you can understand what is being done in the community **and** how to get things done. In addition, all these agencies can be great resources for community projects. In this activity, you'll explore the community to find out more about these agencies.

I. Locating Information About the Community

Your community exploration will be more successful if you use the following:

Pen and paper. Write down what you find.

Telephone. Calling may be faster than going there. If you call a large agency and don't know who to ask for, ask for "public information."

Local phone book. Look here first. Check the different sections:

- *White Pages* list individuals and organizations in alphabetical order. Some phone books list organizations separately in the *Red Pages*.
- *Blue Pages* list government offices under headings of city, county, state, and U.S. government.
- *Yellow Pages* list organizations by products and services that they provide.
- The front of many phone books has a lot of helpful information about community organizations.

Local library. The library holds lots of information about the community. Tell the reference librarian what you're looking for.

Map of the community. You may get one free from Chamber of Commerce, Auto Club, Tourist Bureau, or City Hall.

II. Activity

Break into four groups—one for education, public safety, health, and environment. In your group, find government **and** non-profit agencies that work on your problem area. Fill out a 3 X 5 card for each one. Put the following information on the card in this order:

1. Name, address, and telephone number of the agency.
2. Problem area it focuses on.
3. State whether it is a governmental organization or a non-profit.
4. Name and job title of contact person.
5. Short description of purpose of agency.

III. For Discussion

1. What was your best resource for finding things?
2. What are non-profit organizations? How are they different from government agencies?
3. Which organizations seemed most important in working on the different problem areas? Why?
4. What relationships do you see between these various agencies?
5. How can you use the information you found?

Policy Analysis

Introduction: Would you vote for a new environmental initiative? Will that politician's education proposal work? Do you support spending more tax money on public safety? As a citizen, you'll need to evaluate government policies and policy proposals. Take, for example, the policy of sending young non-violent offenders to boot camps. Is it a good policy? Read the following essay and decide.

I. Boot Camps for Young Offenders

When a young adults commit a non-violent first offense, what should happen to them? Should they go to prison, or is this too harsh? Should they get probation, or is this too soft? What should happen?

One proposal is to send them to "boot camps." About 30 states have already established boot camps. Boot camps provide short-term lockup (usually up to six months) with a daily routine emphasizing military-style discipline, drills, and respect for authority. The young inmates also put in a long day of hard work. Those who fail the program are sent on to a regular adult prison.

Advocates say that boot camps give young offenders a chance to change their ways. They also say that boot camps keep youthful first-timers apart from hardened offenders, who might influence the young offenders. Moreover, advocates say that boot camps, which are far cheaper to run than main-line prisons, free up prison space for hardened career criminals.

Critics reply that there is no proof that strict military-type discipline will straighten out young criminals. They cite studies that show the rate of repeat offenders does not differ much between boot camp graduates and those put on probation or in a regular jail. Critics argue that the "yes, sir" attitude instilled in boot camp soon disappears once the offender returns to the old neighborhood.

II. Activity

In small groups, use the following policy-analysis questions to evaluate boot camps. Write down your answers.

1. What is the policy? Describe.
2. What problem(s) is the policy designed to address? List.
3. What are the policy's pros and cons? List.
4. What are the alternatives? List.
5. Is the policy more effective than the alternatives? Explain.

III. For Discussion

1. Would you recommend that your state build boot camps? Explain.
2. What are policies? What other policies do you know about?
3. Why is analyzing policy important?
4. Do you think it's important to ask these policy-analysis questions? Why or why not? Can you think of other questions worth asking?

Conducting a News Search

Introduction: As an American citizen, it is important to be well-informed. Newspapers can supply a great deal of information about community issues such as education, public safety, health, and the environment. How does your local newspaper cover these issues? In this activity, you will use the local newspaper as an information-gathering tool.

I. Newspapers

The front section of a newspaper usually contains what journalists call "hard news," articles that cover important world, national, or local stories. The metro, or local section, takes a closer look at regional news, and may cover problems and issues in your community. The editorial page contains articles, cartoons, and letters that express opinions on issues. The feature section carries more in-depth articles on community, social, and cultural events. The business section sometimes runs articles on community issues.

News stories begin with a *lead paragraph*, with facts that help answer the questions WHO, WHAT, WHEN, and WHERE. The story then proceeds to lesser facts describing the WHYs and HOWs of the story. Since the lead paragraph summarizes the important facts, you can read it to get a basic understanding of the article without having to read the entire story.

II. Activity

In small groups, search your local newspaper for articles on the topics of **education**, **crime**, **health**, and the **environment**. List each article you find under each topic. Write a brief description of the main idea of each article. Choose one person to report your findings to the larger group.

Here are some tips to help you search the paper quickly and easily:

- **Scan the headlines** for words and ideas relating to the topics listed above.
- **Skim the first paragraph** of the story to grasp the main idea.
- **Study the article** for facts on the topic.
- **Think** about what you read. Later, you are going to discuss the information you read.

III. For Discussion

1. What topics did the newspaper cover the most?
2. Did it cover the problems you think are the most important problems in the community?
3. Did the newspaper describe the problems fairly and accurately? Explain.

Polling

Introduction: You often hear results of opinion polls. Newspapers report them. Politicians cite them to show the public supports their proposals. In debates on issues, people bring them up. But like most statistics, poll results can mislead. When looking at the results of any opinion poll, it's helpful to ask the following questions.

I. Questions to Ask About Opinion Polls and Surveys

Who sponsored the survey? Watch out for polls sponsored by groups with an interest in the results.

When was the poll conducted? Even if a poll is accurate, it only reflects one point in time—the time it was taken. As a general rule, the more recent the poll, the more meaningful it is.

What were the questions? Confusing, biased, or emotionally charged questions produce misleading answers.

Who was interviewed? How many people? In general, the more the better. Were they selected at random? If not, the poll is suspect.

II. Activity

Conduct the following survey on another person in your group. Discuss the results with the whole group. Before the next meeting, poll five community members and report your results at the next meeting.

Survey:

1. Do you vote? YES NO
2. Have you served on a jury? YES NO
3. Have you ever written a letter to the editor of a newspaper? YES NO
4. Have you ever written a letter to an elected official? YES NO
5. Have you ever done volunteer work for a community-based organization? YES NO
6. Have you ever worked on a political campaign? YES NO
7. Have you ever started a community project? YES NO
8. Do you stay informed on community issues? YES NO

   If YES, then how do you stay informed? (check all that are appropriate)

   ____ read a daily newspaper

   ____ listen to news on radio

   ____ watch TV news

   ____ other _____

III. For Discussion

1. What surprised you about the results? What didn't surprise you?
2. Do you think the results of the survey would be similar across the nation? For the community at large? Explain.
3. Which of the citizen behaviors on the survey do you think is most important? Least important? Explain.
4. How can these citizen behaviors be encouraged?

Does It Make Sense?

Introduction: As a citizen, you need to be able to make sound decisions based on accurate information and objective reasoning—not on propaganda. Propaganda uses emotional appeals to persuade instead of a straightforward argument. Since propaganda is often subtle, it pays to know how to recognize it.

I. Types of Propaganda

Here are a few techniques to watch out for:

- **Glittering generality.** Tries to associate the policy, politician, or product with some positive idea or feeling.
- **Name calling.** Relies on tagging an opponent or opposing idea with negative names, ideas, and associations.
- **Bandwagon.** Asks you to join the crowd. Don't get left behind.
- **Repetition.** Asks you to believe it because you've heard it so often.
- **Plain folks.** Attempts to portray the individual or organization as just being ordinary people.
- **Testimonial.** Asks you to take the word of a celebrity who is not an expert on the subject being discussed.

II. Activity

In pairs, identify the type of propaganda in each example below.

1. In one year, a company runs a jingle on radio 10,000 times saying: "Toothpaste W gets your teeth brightest."
2. Announcer: "Let's ask the man on the street how he feels about Candidate X."

   Man on the street: "I support Candidate X. She knows what it's like to be a working person."
3. "You don't want to be a vegetarian. Hitler was a vegetarian."
4. "Sign the petition. We've already got thousands of signatures."
5. "How can you not support Candidate Y? Practically every star in Hollywood has endorsed her."
6. "Candidate Z is a patriotic, freedom-loving, family man. Vote for Candidate Z."

III. For Discussion

1. What are some examples of propaganda you've heard in the media?
2. Why do you think people use propaganda?
3. Why is it important to recognize propaganda?

Values in Conflict

Introduction: Conflicts and disagreement are inevitable and even necessary to the democratic process. People argue over what should be done about crime, the environment, education, etc. Conflicts even arise over basic values and citizen rights. In the case of *California v. Greenwood*, a dispute arose over trash bags. The case was appealed all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

I. California v. Greenwood

In 1984, Billy Greenwood was arrested and convicted in California on felony narcotics charges. The main evidence against Greenwood had been gathered by police from Greenwood's plastic trash bags. Greenwood had left them on the curb in front of his house for the trash collector. The police did not have a search warrant, but they did get permission from the trash collector to look through Greenwood's trash bags.

To conduct a search, police need both "probable cause" that a person has committed a crime *and* a search warrant. Police had neither. But, attorneys for the state of California argued, police did not conduct a "search" as defined by law. A search is a governmental intrusion into something in which a person has **a reasonable expectation of privacy**. Greenwood, argued the state's attorneys, had no reasonable expectation of privacy in trash bags left on the curb for the trash collector. Greenwood's lawyers argued that Greenwood did have a reasonable expectation of privacy in these bags and that therefore the police had conducted a search, which they had no right to do.

The California Court of Appeals agreed with Greenwood and so did the California Supreme Court. Finally, the state of California appealed the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The court had to decide this question: **Did Greenwood have a reasonable expectation of privacy in trash bags left on the curb for collection?**

II. Activity

In groups of three, debate the question in the *Greenwood* case. Have one person in each group take the role of a defense attorney, another take the role of an attorney for the state, and the third take the role of a Supreme Court justice. Prepare for the role and sharpen your arguments by first meeting with members who are taking the same role. Then meet with your group of three and begin the role play.

III. For Discussion

1. What were the strongest arguments for each side? Why?
2. How do you think the case should have been decided?
3. Why do you think justices hearing the same arguments in a case come to different conclusions?

Getting Involved

Introduction: Have you ever heard someone say, "I just didn't want to get involved"? Sometimes there are good reasons not to get involved, but sometimes people don't get involved for the wrong reasons: unjustifiable fears, apathy, or a lack of concern for others. Read the following story and decide why these people didn't get involved.

I. Thirty-eight Witnesses

Late in the night of March 14, 1964, Kitty Genovese returned from work to her home in Kew Gardens, a middle-class New York suburb. Parking her car in a lot, she started to walk the short distance to her first-floor apartment. Before she could get to her door, a man attacked her with a knife. She screamed. Lights came on. Windows opened and someone shouted, "Let that girl alone!" The attacker ran off. Windows closed and lights went out. Wounded, Kitty struggled to get to her door. But the attacker returned. She screamed again. Lights went on again, and the attacker once again retreated. Once the lights were off, the attacker returned a third time and stabbed Kitty Genovese to death. In all, the attacks had continued for 35 minutes. Thirty-eight people had heard her screams, but no one had bothered to call the police. When the police were called, they arrived in two minutes. But it was too late. When the witnesses were questioned about why they did not call, most gave the same answer: "I didn't want to get involved."

II. For Discussion

1. What reasons might the 38 witnesses have had for not getting involved? Are any of them valid in this situation? Why or why not?
2. What other kinds of situations might happen in which people don't want to get involved?
3. Is getting involved an important part of citizenship? Why?
4. What can be done to encourage people to get involved?

Differing Perspectives

Introduction: In American society, you'll encounter people with varying experiences and different opinions—they may be at odds your own. Understanding other people's perspectives is a useful skill in today's diverse society. Today we'll look at some factors that might create differing points of view.

I. Differences of Opinion

People's opinions are shaped by their experience, education, and also by their sex, age, and race. Below are three opinion polls that show strong differences based on gender, race, and age. When you read them, try to think of reasons the opinions split as they do.

1. Favorable opinion of Hillary Clinton (1993):

   men: 40%

   women: 60%

2. O.J. Simpson (February 1995):

   whites: 61% believe he is guilty.

   blacks: 68% believe he is innocent.

3. Extension of civil rights laws to homosexuals (1992):

   age 18–29: 56% favor

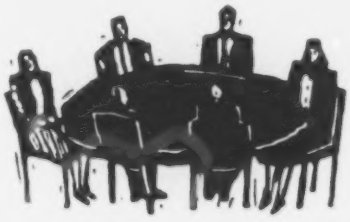
   age 65+: 35% favor

II. Activity

In small groups, discuss reasons the opinions in each poll split as they do.

III. For Discussion

1. Why do you think these groups' opinions split so much on these issues?
2. What other issues do you think split along race, gender, or age lines?
3. What other factors, aside from race, gender, and age, might cause deep differences in opinion?
4. Do you think it's important to discuss controversial issues with people with different perspectives? Why or why not?



Citizenship and Voting

Introduction: Democracy comes from two Greek words that mean "people," and "power." All over the world, people have fought and died for democracy and the right to vote. Yet in America, almost half the people who can vote *don't bother to vote*. Why don't people vote?

I. People Who Vote

To consider this question, we are going to compare statistics about people who vote in several different democracies.

Percentage of people **of voting age** who actually voted in recent national elections.*

Australia 94%

Sweden 91%

France 86%

Israel 78%

United Kingdom 76%

Japan 74%

United States **53%**

* These statistics come from a study by Harvard University and ABC News.

II. For Discussion

1. Why do you think countries like Australia, Sweden, and France have high percentages of people who vote?
2. Is voting important? Why or why not?
3. Why don't Americans vote? List as many causes as you can for low voter turnout in the United States. What do you believe is the main cause?
4. How do you think we could get more Americans to vote?

Active Citizenship for Life

Introduction: What can citizens do to make a difference? How can you play an active, meaningful role in your community? Today, you'll examine how you, as a citizen, can strive to improve the quality of life at work, in your neighborhood, and even in your home.

I. Effective Citizenship

Citizenship does not simply mean voting, obeying the law, and serving on juries. Effective citizens help their communities. This can be by taking an active role in local, state, or national politics. It can be by volunteering for community organizations. It can be by working to improve things at work, in the neighborhood, and even at home.

Citizens can contribute to the community in many ways. If they take time to help their child to read, they've helped their community. If they help form a Neighborhood Watch, they've helped their community. If they get their place of work to participate in a recycling program, they've helped their community.

Actions have consequences. What you do can make a difference.

II. Activity

Let's focus on four problem areas for most communities: environment, education, health, and public safety. Break into four groups, one for each problem area. Each group should think of what people could do to help their community in that area. Each group should brainstorm things a person could do...

- at work.
- at home.
- in the neighborhood.
- in the community.

III. For Discussion

1. For which place—work, home, neighborhood, community—did you think of the most ideas? The least? Why?
2. Where is it easiest to contribute to the community? Why?
3. What makes a good citizen?
4. What could you do to encourage good citizenship?

What Can You Do?

Introduction: You probably know a lot about your community. What would you like to see changed? Is there too much crime? Is there too much pollution? Do young people have a safe place to play after school? Do people have enough food and clothing? How can you make a difference? Read this true story about a successful neighborhood project, and then make your own plan to address a community problem.

I. Making a Difference

Elizabeth Carter started a community project to convert rundown houses in East Liverpool, Ohio, into centers that offer food, clothing, shelter, and education to young and old people in need. "It's not a wealthy neighborhood," she explains. "This is how it is. Right across the street is the Adult Clothing House. A neighbor gave that house to me. People give us so many clothes now, it's like a K-Mart. We run it on the honor system. Go in, take what you need, and please straighten up when you're done."

She has also set up a Children's Clothing House, which runs the same way. Next door, volunteers have turned an empty lot into a playground for neighborhood children. On Friday nights, children go to the Creativity Center, where volunteers teach arts and crafts.

Volunteers have converted another house into a residence for homeless people. Nearby is the Music House. "That Music House is magic. An older man started dropping by after he lost his job. At first, he was very withdrawn. Then he opened up, started talking. Music does that. We help every imaginable kind of person—black, white, red, yellow, green, it doesn't matter. And our supporters and volunteers are of all colors, too."

II. For Discussion

An effective action project can address more than one need. What different needs does the project in "Making a Difference" address?

III. Activity

What can you do? Break into small groups to brainstorm a project that might make a difference in your community. Use these steps to create your own action plan:

1. **Problem.** What problem do you want to work on?
2. **Goals.** What do you want to achieve?
3. **Tasks.** What do you need to do to achieve your goals?
4. **Partners.** Who might help you?
5. **Obstacles.** What—or who—might get in your way?
6. **Evaluation.** How will you measure your success?

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION
601 South Kingsley Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90005
(213) 487-5590
(213) 386-0459 FAX